



CONNECTING, INSPIRING & EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENTALLY MINDED WOMEN

# KWEN Quarterly

July 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

## Igniting Sparks

I'm writing this fresh off of a weekend trip to Devil's Den State Park in West Fork, Arkansas. As I peered over the edge of Yellow Rock Overlook (see photo above), an eagle flew by just feet from my head and I felt alive, rejuvenated and excited again. It was a spark moment; a moment that motivated movement and positive thoughts about the future.

This concept of "sparks" has really taken shape under the work of Dr. Peter Benson, author of *Sparks!: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers*. In his [TEDx Talk](#), Dr. Benson channels Plutarch when he says, "Youth are not vessels to be filled, but fires to be lit." The best of human development comes from the inside-out, not the outside in. For young people to thrive, they must be able to identify and build the fire within them. My experience training youth development professionals has shown me that if we, as adults, are going to support the passions of others, we need to take time to reflect on our own motivations and work toward igniting new sparks within ourselves.

During our annual leadership retreat, we started with an icebreaker activity in which we randomly chose a number between 5 and 25. We were then challenged to recall a spark moment from our youth, ideally at the age we chose. At five years old I remember being completely fascinated with the ocean.

I was particularly interested in deep sea creatures and ship wrecks. This fascination is what sparked my excitement for reading and researching. I bugged my mom to take me to the library because I just had to know more about the giant squid. Despite the MANY years that have passed between then and now, I can see how that spark put me on the path to becoming the researcher, earth enthusiast and animal lover that I am today.

We rarely give ourselves the opportunity to think about all of the little sparks it must take to keep our human engines moving. The leadership team wanted to give KWEN women the opportunity to reflect on, and share their spark stories with the group. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, the KWEN quarterly meeting featured an event, KWEN Kwiks, where members new and old were challenged to talk about a topic of their choice for two minutes. Eleven women stepped up to the challenge, and because of that we learned more about the topics that ignite sparks in them; topics like soil health, *Moby Dick*, the [Fracking Quilt Project](#), [KACEE](#), product transparency, the DIVA cup, the [Farm Resettlement Congress](#), carpooling, Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment and more!

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We continue to share and reflect in this issue of KWEN Quarterly. I want to thank everyone who submitted their creative contributions. We look forward to sharing your sparks and the inspiration that will move KWEN forward in the coming year!

Chavis Lickvar-Armstrong



## RESERVE A BOOTH FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR UPCOMING SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES EVENT

Mother Earth News magazine hosts several Fairs each year to encourage hands-on learning and face-to-face interactions as a way to support more sustainable lifestyles.

Thousands of workshops on a wide range of topics, from beekeeping to gardening to home solar power, and hundreds of vendors gather for a weekend to share knowledge, ideas and inspiration. This October 24 and 25, the Fair will be returning to the Kansas Expocentre in Topeka.

If your group is interested in an informational booth to spread the word about your organization's good work, you can find the form to sign up at [www.MotherEarthNewsFair.com](http://www.MotherEarthNewsFair.com), along with ticket and sponsorship information.

# KWEN Retreat Summary

The second half of the Leadership Team retreat focused on taking feedback from the survey and polling the Leadership Team to answer the question 'What will be KWEN's top objectives in the coming year'? We ended up with a nice tangible list of 6 goals which we sorted into two main categories: 1. Those goals which increase our "inward" capacity building and 2. the goals which forward our "outward" mission to connect, inspire and empower Kansas women working in the environment.

So, without further ado, here is the list. We hope you see some items on here from your survey feedback, and some exciting new items as well!

## CAPACITY BUILDING "INWARD" OBJECTIVES:

**STREAMLINE MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP:** MAKE THE NEW MEMBER SIGN-UP, WELCOME AND ACCESS TO OUR ASSETS AS EASY AS POSSIBLE, INCLUDING ELECTRONIC PAYMENT FOR CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS.

**STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS:** CREATE A MORE ROBUST WEBSITE AND CLARIFY COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS TO CREATE EASIER NETWORKING/SHARING. CREATE A COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES OUTLINING WHAT CAN BE SHARED BY MEMBERS.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY:** ENSURE WE HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR BASIC EXPENSES LIKE QUARTERLY MEETINGS.

**PRIORITIZE OTHER FUNDING NEEDS AND WANTS AND RESEARCH OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES LIKE GRANTS.**

## MISSION BUILDING "OUTWARD" OBJECTIVES:

**4. RAISE THE PROFILE OF KWEN:** TABLE AT OUTSIDE EVENTS, SHARE OUR BUSINESS CARDS, RESEARCH EVENT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, REACH OUT TO LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING STUDENTS.

**5. ENERGIZE THE MEMBERSHIP:** SHOW OFF ALL THE WAYS KWEN HELPS CONNECT, INSPIRE AND EMPOWER, LIKE LIFTING UP COLLABORATIONS AMONG OUR MEMBERS. BRING IN SPEAKERS FOR OUR QUARTERLY MEETINGS. CREATE MORE CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES AND ENCOURAGE MEMBER GENERATED ACTIVITIES (I.E. BOOK CLUB LED BY A MEMBER). SHARE OUR SUCCESS STORIES.

**6. EDUCATE & EMPOWER MEMBERSHIP:** PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIPS TO EVENTS, A RESOURCE DATABASE, MENTORING, COORDINATE DISCOUNTS FOR LEADERSHIP TRAININGS, AND NOMINATING KWEN MEMBERS TO ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.



*Taking a break from discussion, Co-chair Jenica Nelson enjoys the views and the company at leadership member, Sue Kidd's home in Lawrence, KS*

# FIXED CHARGE INCREASES AFFECT ENERGY BILLS

*Submitted by Olga Khakova, Program Director for the Climate + Energy Project*

Westar's proposed rate changes will increase the residential service charge from \$12/month to \$27/month by 2019. The proposed rate structure makes it more difficult to control your energy bills with investments in energy efficiency, conservation or by using alternative energy sources like solar energy or wind power.

According to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the average monthly customer service fees charged by other utilities nationwide averages between \$5 and \$10. (Westar current charge is \$12, proposed is \$27)

The customer service charge is fixed--this amount will be charged regardless of the amount of energy that is consumed by a household.

All of Westar's proposed rate plan options are complicated and currently include the higher customer charge.

Higher Fixed Charges will negatively impact energy efficiency and solar.

**YOUR VOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE! HOW YOU CAN HELP:**

## Offer comments at a Public Hearing

The KCC will hold public hearings to provide customers an opportunity to speak to the Commission about proposed rate increases. The public hearings will consist of brief presentations by each of the Parties and an opportunity for customers to make official comments before the Commission.

## Submit public comments

The KCC will accept written comments from Westar customers through August 11.

By email: [public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov](mailto:public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov)

By phone: 1-800-662-0027 or (785) 271-3140.

By mail: Kansas Corporation Commission, Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, 1500 SW Arrowhead Rd., Topeka, KS 66604-4027.

Reference Docket No 15-WSEE-115-RTS

### IMPORTANT DATES:

**August 11** - Public comments are due

**October 28** - KCC decision on Westar Docket

For additional information please visit <http://www.climateandenergy.org/>

# Farm Fresh Challenge: How Do You Eat Local?



Share your answer this August when you join the Farm Fresh Challenge in Douglas County! This fun campaign organized by the Douglas County Food Policy Council shows how easy it can be to incorporate local foods into a healthy lifestyle. In partnership with both Lawrence Hy-Vee stores, The Merc, Checkers, Baldwin City Market, Gene's Heartland Foods and Door-to-Door Organics, the Farm Fresh Challenge will utilize in-store events, social media, and a central website with stories and recipes all about local food! Keep up to date with the Farm Fresh Challenge for updates about contests, prizes, and (of course) temporary tattoos.

## HOW DOES THE FARM FRESH CHALLENGE WORK?

PARTICIPANTS CAN CHOOSE TO TAKE ON ONE OF FOUR CHALLENGE OPTIONS:

**Shopper:** Spend \$10 per week on local food.

**Cook:** Use local foods in a recipe.

**Taster:** Taste something different by trying a new local food.

**Adventurer:** Choose your own adventure!

AS A KWEN MEMBER, HELP US SPREAD THE WORD AND MAKE THE FARM FRESH CHALLENGE A SUCCESS! CHECK OUT OUR [website](#), AND FOLLOW US ON [facebook](#) AND [twitter](#).

Join us to kick things off at this year's Chefs Challenge, Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at the Douglas County Fair from 5pm to 7:30pm!

Contact Helen Schnoes, Food Systems Coordinator at Douglas County, with questions and more information on how you can support our efforts to foster a healthy, local food system: [hschnoes@douglas-county.com](mailto:hschnoes@douglas-county.com) // [785-832-5157](tel:785-832-5157)

## KUDOS

KUDOS TO KWEN MEMBER **CARYN MERRIAM-GOLDBERG** ON HER AMAZING PRESENTATION AT THE LAWRENCE ARTS CENTER DURING THE FREE STATE FILM FESTIVAL. CARYN READ POEMS AND HER CO-AUTHOR SHOWED SLIDES AND VIDEOS FROM THEIR LATEST BOOK, *CHASING WEATHER*.



## KWEN Member Angie Babbit Shares Art and Inspiration

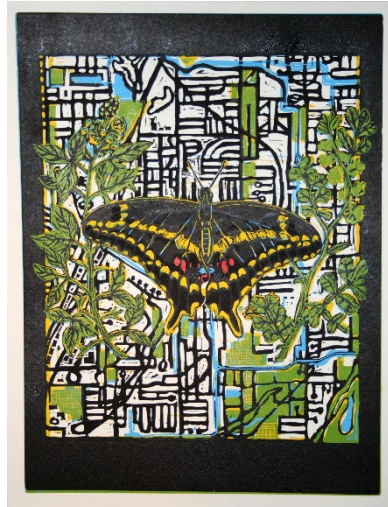
*Submitted by Angie Babbit*

The "Five Endangered Butterflies" series represents the five families of butterflies that are found on the Endangered Species List in the United States. Each of the prints contains the butterfly, its specific larval host plant and a topographic map of the original range of the butterfly. The Schaus' Swallowtail is the largest of the endangered butterflies, and is threatened by habitat destruction, as evidenced by the landscape of Miami, Florida. The Schaus' Swallowtail habitat is so small that one hurricane could wipe out the entire wild population.

The environment inspires all of my work, especially with photography. I rarely work with a flash, and I prefer natural sunlight over artificial light. I photograph landscapes, plants and animals. Some of my favorite photos are of small, human animals interacting with nature in ways that can serve as lasting, positive experiences.



*Sandcastle Days  
Bloomington Beach, 2009*



*Endangered Schaus' Swallowtail  
From the Five Endangered Butterfly  
Series  
Miami-Dade  
Sea Torchwood and Lime  
3 color linocut and watercolor on Rives  
lightweight paper, 115gsm.*

### UPCOMING EVENT

Introducing the KWEN Environmental Book Club!

We will kick things off with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Our first meeting will be in September, in Lawrence, KS (Date/time/location TBD). To participate, email Helen Schnoes at [helenaschnoes@gmail.com](mailto:helenaschnoes@gmail.com)

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Elizabeth Schultz Environmental Fund will begin taking applications for 2015 grants beginning August 1. The fund supports to a wide variety of Douglas County efforts to preserve and understand nature. Projects may address the fund's goals in scientific, cultural, educational, aesthetic or economic ways. Organizations may apply for up to \$10,000 in funding. The application deadline is October 1. For more information, visit [www.dccfoundation.org](http://www.dccfoundation.org).



Photo Submitted by KWEN Member  
Emily Reno – St. Petersburg, Russia

From left to right: Kayla Grumbles, Emily Reno, Kendyl Leigh, Maria Zhevlakoba. At Peterhof's Palace in St. Petersburg, Russia, as part of a cultural exchange to promote sustainability initiatives in higher education. This project is funded by a grant from the United States Department of State's U.S. – Russia Peer-to-Peer Program (award # S-RS500-15-GR-124). For more information about this project, visit the information page.

#### KUDOS

We would like to thank two very special Leadership Team members who are stepping down from their roles. **Eileen Horn** and **Ferdouz Cochran** have spent the past 2 years with the Leadership Team. They have both played a tremendous role in the beginnings of KWEN and the Leadership Team, especially in the areas of meeting planning and our communications.

**Ferdouz Cochran** has accepted a tenure-track instructor position at the University of Hawaii-Maui College. We will miss her in Lawrence, but congratulate her on this great accomplishment!

KWEN Co-Chair **Janica Nelson** began a new job this summer with the City of Lawrence as a Waste Reduction and Recycling Specialist for the city's Solid Waste Division.

## Are You Not Repurposing The Elephant Poo?

### An Essay

By Sharon Ashworth

The coral reefs have stopped growing and soon they will start dissolving in a carbonic acid bath. Colony after colony of bees suddenly dead, wacky weather, disastrous droughts, horrendous hurricanes, and now you're told microwaving plastics leaches endocrine disruptors into our food. Good god the bad news is overwhelming, and there you sit in your Prius with your cloth bag full of expensive micro-greens and organic, heirloom tomatoes. Do you think you are going to save the world that way? Of course you are not going to save the world, which is why you are derided and jeered at by those who do not care about dissolving reefs and by those who care more than you do. But I celebrate you. You, among those who drive to Costco to shop for bulk mangoes and steak, but grow their own vegetables; those who spurn cars for commuting but load their pantries with soda and corn-syrup based food; those who turn out the lights when leaving rooms but leave every electronic device plugged in; yes, even those who load up recyclables in their SUVs. I could berate you and everyone else for inconsistency and ineffectiveness, but I do not live on a wind-powered, organic vegetable commune, travel by horse, or weave my own cloth from the wool of humanely raised sheep. I want to celebrate every, small, inconsequential effort simply because each is an acknowledgement, a nod, a recognition of larger issues at hand and we are all hypocritical, inconsistent, imperfect beings working with incomplete information.

I was told once by an Earth Day speaker that there was nothing I, personally, could do about the state of our environment except to send money to environmental groups who lobby for change. Forget that, I'll take my money and go buy a tomato, an organic tomato, from a local farmer at the farmer's market. No, the tomato won't solve the global climate crisis and it won't even mean one less tomato trucked in from California or Mexico. But it will make my family healthier, it will set an example for my child, and it will help keep a local farmer working the land. It's like a loose change jar; the random pieces of coin you throw in won't pay your medical bills, but may help you buy fresh veggies to keep the bills at bay. Hope inspires action and action inspires hope.

Still, we need to feed our burgeoning population, we are losing habitats and species at a frightening clip, we are continually exposed to multiple pesticides and industrial chemicals, and in the U.S. an absurdly large chunk of the population refuses to admit we are altering the climate. To grapple with such issues we require the help and expertise of the advocacy groups I just flippantly shunned. They serve the very real need to organize, to lobby, to inform, to catalyze a shift in the systemic, destructive trajectory we are on. Besides, if you are busy demonstrating against the XL pipeline, who will fight to end the poaching of endangered species? And remember, while you are protesting, there are plenty of people who have a smaller carbon footprint than you simply because they are too poor to buy shoes.

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Look, if you are reading this while drinking fair-trade organic coffee from your reusable World Wildlife Fund mug after biking to work, you get it. You get the connections and have decided that doing something is better than giving up or unloading responsibility onto someone else. Of course more can be done and should be done. Did you know notepaper can be made from elephant poo? So why do you and your employer buy notepaper made from trees? Maybe you advocate for walkable cities, or raise money to provide solar ovens in Africa, or work to preserve the endangered Pondberry. If so, thank you. But a friend once said to me that “environmental issues” were not what got her out of bed in the morning – she works to ensure fair labor practices. Others get up in the morning to end human trafficking, to provide schools for girls in Afghanistan, to house the homeless, to teach, to heal, to create art, to raise kids, to provide for their families – so much to do, so much to contribute, and combating global warming may not be first on the list and that list may not be written on paper made from elephant poo. But these people turn off the tap when they brush their teeth and they’ve made the switch from incandescent to compact fluorescent. If we tell them that is not enough to make a difference, why should they bother taking the next step by biking to school or speaking to the city commission about open space preservation? We can’t afford to grumble hopelessness or submit to paralysis. I, as one who does wake up worrying about the condition of the planet, need to make it easier for my neighbor Christie, who works with teenagers and violence prevention, to concentrate on her work and know that her everyday choices can safeguard a livable planet for her kids. This is what larger, systemic change can bring – the ability to live in a way that allows us to follow our passions without simultaneously ruining our habitat.

Bringing cloth bags to the grocery store doesn’t cost me anything. It’s such a small request. But this small act matters to the turtle who does not eat the plastic bag after it ends up in the ocean, it means there are a few more drops of oil for something we really need like the plastic tubing used to deliver blood and medicine. If we as a species are to make a go of it on this planet, people deserve to be celebrated and, more importantly, encouraged for their good deeds, large and small. So, if you are reading this while plugged into the coal-powered electric grid, but munching on a salad you brought in your own tupperware, raise that reusable container in salute. If you are reading this while eating your microwaved breakfast burrito but commuting to work on the bus or train, high-five your fellow passengers. If you’ve just driven home from the farmer’s market, give your kid a big hug, and a tomato.

Cheers,

Sharon Ashworth

## For the Children

A poem submitted by Kim Bellemere, “A colleague, Dale Nimz, sent this to me recently and I think it’s great.”

The rising hills, the slopes,  
of statistics  
lie before us.  
the steep climb  
of everything, going up,  
up, as we all  
go down.  
In the next century  
or the one beyond that,  
they say,  
are valleys, pastures,  
we can meet there in peace  
if we make it.  
To climb these coming crests  
one word to you, to  
you and your children:  
stay together  
learn the flowers  
go light

Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island* (New York: New Directions, 1974). Copyright © 1974 by Gary Snyder. Reprinted with permission of New Directions Pub. Corp.

## Roots, Shoots & Boots: Healthy Farms, Healthy People from the Ground Up

KRC’s 2015 Farm & Food  
Conference

November 13 – 14, 2015,  
Manhattan, Ks.

Mark your calendars! This two day conference promises to have something for a broad spectrum of attendees—from conventional and organic and specialty crop farmers, to beginning and established farmers, and local food advocates and community leaders.

The first day will be dedicated to a Soil Health Forum: The Nexus Between Cover Crops, No Till and Organic Systems. Featured speakers on day one will include a USDA NRCS soil health specialist (to be confirmed), as well as [Jeff Moyer](#), Rodale Institute’s Research Director, who will speak on organic no till and opportunities in organic; and [Klaas Martens](#), who operates a 1400 acre certified organic grain farm near Penn Yan, NY. Klaas is well known and respected in organic circles for his broad knowledge of cover crops, crop rotations and heirloom grains. Also see Klaas featured in [New York Times article](#) last year.

The day will also feature a panel of cover crop/no till and organic farmers discussing challenges and lessons learned, and identifying issues in common.

The second day will feature keynote speaker David Hunt, a nationally recognized teacher and leader in organizing for social change.

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Hunt will set a tone of action for policy development, issue and community organizing, and community building throughout a packed day of diverse sessions and speakers. Breakout sessions will focus on local food systems, community food solutions and economic opportunities, farm transitions and beginning farmer opportunities, health-agriculture connections, state and federal food policy, and more. The agenda and speakers for both days is still being finalized, and more information will be posted as it develops.

#### CALL FOR SPONSORS

THE CONFERENCE EACH YEAR WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF SPONSORS. SPONSORSHIP ALLOWS KRC TO PRODUCE A TOP QUALITY CONFERENCE COMPLETE WITH RENOWNED SPEAKERS, DIVERSE WORKSHOPS, EXHIBITS, LOCALLY SOURCED FOOD AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES THAT CREATE A POSITIVE, MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE FOR CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS. SEVERAL DIFFERENT LEVELS AND BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP ARE AVAILABLE NOW WITH EACH LEVEL PROVIDING A UNIQUE WAY TO SUPPORT THE CONFERENCE.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please Contact:  
Natalie Fullerton  
866-579-5469  
[nfullerton@kansasruralcenter.org](mailto:nfullerton@kansasruralcenter.org)

For more information about the Kansas Rural Center, visit [www.kansasruralcenter.org](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org).

## Olga Khakova, KWEN Leadership Team member, joins the Climate + Energy Project

**As Program Director for the Climate + Energy Project**, Olga Khakova will contribute to the organizational mission to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

Hired in June 2015, Olga will be assisting with multiple CEP initiatives:

A CLEAN POWER PLAN BLUEPRINT DEVELOPMENT, INITIATING PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS TO CUTTING CARBON EMISSIONS IN KANSAS THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ON THE PROPOSED WESTAR RATE INCREASE AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON SOLAR AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TAKE CHARGE CHALLENGE, AN ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMPETITION TO REDUCE ENERGY USE AND RAISE AWARENESS OF CONSERVATION PROGRAMS FOR RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CONSUMERS

WATER + ENERGY PROGRESS, AN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE THAT IDENTIFIES SUCCESSFUL INNOVATIONS IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND WATER CONSERVATION ON KANSAS FARMS AND RANCHES

Olga is thrilled to dedicate her career to not-for-profit work in the environmental field. She looks forward to utilizing over 5 years of corporate experience to create win-win approaches to clean energy growth in Kansas. Olga is pursuing a Master's in Environmental Assessment at the University of Kansas and is anxious to apply what she's learned in her new job.

Huge "Thanks" to KWEN!

KWEN was instrumental in connecting Olga to the environmental community in Lawrence and specifically, Rachel Myslivy,

KWEN co-founder and CEP Program Director. Olga is grateful to be a part of KWEN's supportive network of women who encourage and help each other succeed in the environment field, and in some cases, find a dream job!

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please Contact:  
Olga Khakova, Program Director  
785-424-0055  
[khakova@climateandenergy.org](mailto:khakova@climateandenergy.org)

For more information about Climate + Energy Project, please visit:  
<http://www.climateandenergy.org/>



Photos Submitted by KWEN Member Sofia Galarza Liu – St. John's Earth Care Committee

Parishioners at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Lawrence, Kansas formed an earth care committee in 2014. The St. John Earth Care Committee inspires, educates, and engages parishioners to care for God's creation. Guided by Catholic environmental teachings, the Earth Care Committee focuses on reducing waste, reusing materials, recycling, and conserving resources to promote environmental awareness throughout the parish community and beyond.



## The Kansas Women's Environmental Network connects, inspires and empowers environmentally minded women

Established in 2013, KWEN maintains political neutrality to serve the diverse audience of Kansas women interested in environmental topics. Meetings take place in Lawrence, KS.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT KWEN

For general questions, please feel free to contact the KWEN leadership group at [KWENleadership@gmail.com](mailto:KWENleadership@gmail.com)

You can find out more about KWEN events and gatherings on our website: <https://kansaswomensenvironmentalnetwork.wordpress.com/>

Sign up to be a contributing KWEM member at <http://tinyurl.com/KWENmembership>

For questions regarding the following:

Green Drinks

Contact Jenica Nelson

[lawrence.greendrinks@gmail.com](mailto:lawrence.greendrinks@gmail.com)

Walk the Talk Hikes

Contact Julie Coleman

[jumars6941@att.net](mailto:jumars6941@att.net)

KWEN Quarterly Newsletter

Contact Chavis Lickvar-Armstrong

[clickvar@ku.edu](mailto:clickvar@ku.edu)

KWEN Book Club

Contact Helen Schnoes

[helenaschnoes@gmail.com](mailto:helenaschnoes@gmail.com)